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BY STEPHEN NAFT

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Fascism and Communism in South America

BY STEPHEN NAFT

with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association

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THE establishment on November 10 of a semi-fascist dictatorship in Brazil, where President Vargas proclaimed a constitution with corporative features, focused world attention on the trend of political developments in South America. The question was immediately asked whether the three-cornered struggle among Europe's leading political philosophies—democracy, fascism and communism—now threatens to extend into the Western Hemisphere. If so, its outcome in this area may affect not only the form of government of the Latin American states, but also the degree to which the influence of the United States may be undermined by that of Germany and Italy on the one hand, or that of the Soviet Union on the other.

Representative democracy in the countries of the southern continent has registered but chequered progress at best in its century-long struggle to supplant military dictatorship. In only three republics—Colombia, and to a certain extent Argentina and Chile—can it be said at present to function effectively. Five others—Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay—are now governed by dictatorial régimes, while Uruguay and Venezuela represent border-line cases between dictatorship and democracy.

The development of political democracy in Latin American countries has been retarded by the belated survival of many semi-feudal elements. The wealth of most South American countries—still predominantly agricultural and mineral rather than industrial in character—is concentrated in the hands of a small ruling group.¹ Land is generally held in *latifundia*, or vast estates. The masses of the people for the most part possess no property.

1. Cf. George M. McBride, *Chile: Land and Society* (New York, American Geographical Society, 1936); José Carlos Mariategui, *Siete Ensayos de Interpretación de la Realidad Peruana* (Lima, Biblioteca "Amauta," 1928); Arnold Roller, "Whirlwinds of Rebellion in South America," in *Recovery Through Revolution*, edited by Samuel D. Schmalhausen (New York, Covici-Friede, 1933), pp. 129-59.

Their economic standard bears a closer resemblance to that of southern or southeastern Europe or that of our own southern states, than to that of modern industrial countries.² In some countries, the ranks of wage labor include the bulk of the rural population.

The middle group of the population, situated between the land-owners and the rising industrialists on the one hand and the wage workers and rural semi-peons on the other, consists chiefly of small storekeepers, professional men, clerical employees and the lower ranks of government office-holders. The higher ranks of the bureaucracy and the army are closely connected with the upper classes both by family bonds and social standards.

Political developments in South America inevitably reflect the fundamental economic and social struggle in process among the peoples of the continent. On the one hand are ranged the workers, the lower middle classes and part of the professional men—the "intelligentsia." On the other stand the big landlords—usually allied with the Church which is frequently also a large landholder—the officer corps, the higher bureaucracy and the urban upper classes. Foreign capital is aligned with the second group. The financial hold of the great powers, especially the United States and Britain, upon most South American countries is a matter of general knowledge.³ Foreign capitalists have been more interested in exploiting the natural resources of these semi-colonial countries

2. In Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay, the great majority of the population still consists of illiterate Indians ignorant of the Spanish "national" language and practically outside the orbit of European civilization. The status of most of these Indians resembles in many respects that of medieval serfs. Cf. George M. McBride, *The Agrarian Indian Communities of Highland Peru* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1921).

3. Cf. Max Winkler, *Investments of United States Capital in Latin America* (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1928); United States Senate, Hearings before the Committee on Finance, *Sale of Foreign Bonds or Securities in the United States* (4 volumes), December 18, 1931-February 10, 1932 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1931, 1932).

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than in fostering their industrial development. Among the groups on the Left, the most aggressive has often been organized labor; and it is on this movement, and on the students and other "intellectuals," that socialism and communism have made most impress. An exact appraisal of communist strength is rendered difficult by the propensity of many Latin American rulers to apply this label to any individual or group venturing to criticize or oppose the *status quo*. On the Right, the traditional agencies of conservatism have recently been re-enforced by a nascent fascism.

The first attempts at labor organization came, naturally enough, from Spanish immigrants. During the second half of the last century, these immigrants constituted the bulk of the skilled labor force in the various new industries. As a rule these newcomers had been militantly active in the labor movement of their native country. They brought with them both a certain practical experience in labor struggles and a specific philosophy of their own. Due to peculiar historical circumstances that philosophy stemmed not from Marx, as was the case in most European countries, but from his heretical disciple Bakunin, the founder of modern anarchism.⁴⁻⁵

The methods which the followers of that gospel adopted included the well-known weapons of the anarcho-syndicalist arsenal: general strike, direct action, sabotage, organization by industries and not by crafts, and refusal to take part in any elections to the various parliamentary bodies. Above all, they displayed a well-nigh religious devotion to, and willingness to undergo martyrdom for, the ideal of complete freedom and independence which was visualized under the form of anarchy—in the strict etymological sense of the Greek original which meant "no government."

A notable change in this situation began to take place during the second decade of the present century. Internecine struggles within the anarchist camp facilitated to a certain extent the propaganda of the socialists. Later, the fascination exerted by

the Bolshevik revolution on the younger generation introduced an entirely new element into the South American labor movement. Communist parties began to spring up, their influence enhanced by the propaganda of various immigrants from Russia; in a few countries they grew both at the expense of the anarchists and socialists. The labor movement, reflecting this division among conflicting or competing ideologies, shows an almost kaleidoscopic variety of international affiliations. There are separate international organizations embracing political parties, and again separate "Internationals" for the trade unions. In addition, there are international organizations in a more restricted sense: these include the labor organizations of the Western Hemisphere.

The anarcho-syndicalist trade unions—to begin with the oldest Latin American labor organizations—belong to the International Workingmen's Association, whose seat is now in Barcelona, Spain. Only one South American national trade union organization—that of Argentina—belongs to the International Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam, the oldest and most powerful international trade union body, which since its inception had been under moderate socialist influence.⁶⁻⁷

The communist or communist-influenced trade unions are affiliated with the Red International of Labor Unions or *Profintern*, whose seat is in Moscow. At its foundation, in 1919, it included only two South American national organizations—those of Chile and Colombia. Since 1921, however, these two as well as a number of other national and local trade union bodies have joined the *Confederación Sindical Latino-Americana* (Latin American Labor Federation, known by the initials CSLA), which is linked with the *Profintern*.⁸ At present attempts are on foot—supported by most labor unions—to create a single international trade union organization including both the Amsterdam and Moscow bodies.⁹

The world economic crisis disturbed the com-

6-7. Its political counterpart is the Labor and Socialist International—usually known as the Socialist or Second International—whose seat is in Brussels. Most of the bona fide socialist parties of Latin America are affiliated with this organization.

8. *Bajo la Bandera de la CSLA. Resoluciones y Documentos Varios del Congreso Constituyente de la Confederación Sindical Latino Americana efectuado en Montevideo en Mayo de 1929* (Montevideo, 1930). This Latin American Labor Federation was joined, in addition to the *Federación Obrera Chilena* and the *Confederación Sindical Unitaria* of Colombia, by the *Confederação Geral do Trabalho* of Brazil, the *Confederación General de Trabajo* of Peru and the *Confederación General de Trabajo* of Uruguay.

9. Cf. *New York Times*, November 28, 1937. The communist parties of the various South American countries belong to the Communist International (also called *Comintern* or Third International).

4-5. Cf. E. López Arango and D. A. Santillán, *El Anarquismo en el Movimiento Obrero* (Barcelona, Ediciones "Cosmos," 1925); Max Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, La Internacional y la Alianza en España (1868-1873)* (Buenos Aires, Editorial La Protesta, 1925); Max Nettlau, *Documentos Inéditos sobre la Internacional y la Alianza en España* (Buenos Aires, Editorial La Protesta, 1930); Max Nettlau, *Zur Geschichte der Spanischen Internationale und Landesföderation, 1868-1889* (Leipzig, C. L. Hirschfeld, 1929, 1930); Manuel Buenacasa, *El Movimiento Obrero Español 1886-1926* (Barcelona, Impresos Costa, 1928); Arnold Roller, *Blätter aus der Geschichte des Spanischen Proletariats* (Berlin, G. Schünemann, 1907); Anselmo Lorenzo, *El Proletariado Militante, Memorias de un Internacional, Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores en España* (Barcelona, Antonio López, 1902); continuation of this book: Tomo II (Barcelona, Imprenta Salvat, 1923).

parative social peace which had prevailed in most South American countries since the conclusion of the World War. The decline in the prices of coffee, copper, tin, nitrates, rubber and other staple products of these countries all but shattered the economic structure of South America. Budget deficits, inability to pay the salaries of government employees, numerous bankruptcies, and mass unemployment called forth general discontent and bewilderment. One of the consequences of the depression was a large crop of military revolts or similar uprisings. As a rule these resulted merely in the change of higher military and bureaucratic personnel, and in a spread of military dictatorships over most of the South American republics.¹⁰ Fascism also made its appearance.

FASCISM SOUTH AMERICAN STYLE

Fascism in Latin America often wears the garb and speaks the language of its European models. Its followers have established political and semi-military organizations in a majority of the republics south of the Panama Canal.

Although the dictatorial rule of several South American countries resembles European fascist régimes, a distinction must be made between governmental policies of repression and fascism proper. To date the military dictatorships of Latin America have shown little inclination to impose totalitarian control over economic and cultural, as distinguished from political life. They usually do not seek to regiment the normal course of business, and are even ready—in most cases—to grant a certain degree of tolerance to dissenters, as long as these do not question the monopoly of the ruling clique on all higher administrative and army positions.

Fascist movements in South America generally lack mass support—the main feature of classical fascist régimes of Europe. Except in Brazil they have won no mass support, either in the lower middle class or among the workers. The educated element which constitutes a considerable proportion of total fascist strength is recruited chiefly from the younger generation of the well-to-do, together with a certain number of minor government employees, bank and business clerks, and university students in search of excitement. Some of the students are often under the influence of the Church which, frightened by developments in Mexico and elsewhere, takes politically the same position as in Spain. But these groups are not to be compared with that vast army of “white collar”

employees, and unemployed, down-and-out professionals which in Europe has served as the main reservoir for fascist *cadres*. This social class is not particularly numerous in South America.

The appearance of fascism—although only a caricature of its European prototype—has served to mitigate the mutual hatreds and rivalries among the various sectarian divisions within the labor movement. There is now a tendency toward unification of the trade union organizations. The communists, who formerly never concealed their aspirations toward exclusive control of organized labor, have changed their attitude, in accordance with the resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, held in 1935. They have given up the creation of new labor federations under their own control, and favor unions embracing workers of all political denominations.

VARGAS DICTATORSHIP IN BRAZIL

The assumption of dictatorial powers by President Getulio Vargas on November 10, 1937 came at a time when its significance as a portent was certain to be carefully assessed. It occurred shortly after Italy's adhesion to the German-Japanese “anti-communist” pact had further consolidated the front of the fascist powers. Did the Vargas coup promise establishment of a genuine fascist régime, or point rather toward an old-line *caudillo* dictatorship of the type traditional in Latin America? It affected a country covering almost half of South America, with an area more extensive than continental United States and a population of some 44,000,000.¹¹ The move involved dissolution of both federal and state legislatures, and proclamation of a new constitution with corporative features.

More important than the corporative element in the new constitution is the legal sanction it gives to personal dictatorship, its enthronement of the “Leader” principle. Despite the past prevalence of dictatorial practices in Latin American countries, their constitutions have upheld democratic precepts and the dictators have been at great pains to respect democratic forms. The new Brazilian charter marks a break from this tradition. It endows the President with sweeping powers, declaring him to be the “supreme authority in the state.” He has the right to initiate laws. He is granted

10. Cf. Roller, “Whirlwinds of Rebellion in South America,” cited, pp. 129-59.

11. The best general book in English on Brazil is probably Roy Nash, *Conquest of Brazil* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1926). For a history of the Vargas régime, from its inception with the revolution of 1930, cf. Agnes S. Waddell, “The Revolution in Brazil,” *Foreign Policy Association, Information Service*, March 4, 1931; and Horace Davis, “Brazil's Political and Economic Problems,” *Foreign Policy Reports*, March 15, 1935.

authority to suspend Congress and to dictate legislation by decree. He can intervene in state governments, suspending legislatures and ruling through federal commissioners. No limit is placed on the number of times he may run for re-election—a clear-cut departure from the emphasis on “non-re-election” emphasized in so many Latin American constitutions.

The Brazilian constitution of 1934, itself largely the creation of President Vargas, had expressly forbidden the re-election of the chief executive. The fundamental purpose of the November 10 coup was apparently to eliminate this legal obstacle to the continuance of Vargas in power. The move suddenly brought to an end a political campaign which had been due to culminate in Presidential elections on January 3, 1938.

The Vargas coup drew its main support from the army, and was apparently effected against the wishes of the principal political groups, with the possible exception of the Integralists. Such a move may cost Vargas the support of the old-line leaders, and lead to the formation of a single government party or throw him into the arms of the Integralists, with whom his relations in the past have been somewhat obscure.¹² The green-shirted *Ação Integralista Brasileira* constitutes South America's largest fascist movement. Organized in 1932 by Plinio Salgado, its membership is variously estimated from 200,000 to a million or more. The party is reported to be financed with the aid of German money.¹³ Various high officials in the federal and state governments, and numerous army officers are reported to be Integralists. The party's weekly newspaper in Rio de Janeiro has become a daily, and the movement has its own radio broadcasting station, which disseminates anti-Semitic as well as anti-Marxist propaganda.¹⁴

Members of the party proclaim themselves “integral democrats,” declaring that their creed calls for an integral nation backed by an integral society. *Integralismo* is thus the Brazilian translation of “totalitarianism.” Its specifically Brazilian postulate is administrative centralization and unification, as opposed to what is termed “state regionalism.” The party denounces liberal democracy and universal suffrage and favors instead a corporative state. Its

slogan is “God, Country and Family.” The Integralists emulate various radical elements in their violent denunciation of Brazil's exploitation by foreign interests.¹⁵

Vargas shares with the Integralists a strong enthusiasm for “anti-communism,” a prominent characteristic of fascist movements. In the midst of the Presidential campaign the alleged discovery by military leaders of a nation-wide “communist” plot led to the imposition on October 2, 1937 of a “state of war,” or modified martial law. This measure suspended the right of assembly, freedom of speech and of the press, and established a severe news censorship. Martial law had only been lifted on June 18, after being in force continuously since the unsuccessful revolt of November 1935, which had also been ascribed by the government to communist influence.

UNITED FRONT ESTABLISHED

A united front of Left-wing elements in the political field had been formed early in 1935 with the organization of the *Aliança Nacional Libertadora* (National Liberation Alliance). This grouping included former progressive supporters of Vargas in the revolution of 1930, who had been disillusioned by the trend of his administration, as well as socialists, communists and other workers and intellectuals. It was headed by Luiz Carlos Prestes, a member of the Communist party and a figure with large popular following, who had first come to prominence through leadership of a revolutionary movement in 1926. On July 5, 1935 the Alliance issued its program calling for suspension of payments on foreign debts, Brazilian control of public utilities, expropriation of large estates and their division among the peasants, and various social reforms such as separation of church and state, the 8-hour day, minimum wages, and social insurance.¹⁶

In November 1935 a revolt supported by the National Liberation Alliance broke out, affecting two northeastern states and certain garrisons at Rio de Janeiro. The movement apparently never developed its full strength and, after severe fighting, it was crushed by the government. Following this victory the authorities were reported to have jailed several thousand of their political opponents on the

12. A decree of December 3 dissolved all political parties, including the Integralists, but permitted continuance of these organizations, under a change of name, “for cultural or beneficent ends or purposes of sport.” *New York Times*, December 4, 1937.

13. Brazil has large colonies of Italians and Japanese, as well as Germans. Between 1887 and 1936 1,354,000 Italians entered the country; 177,000 Japanese; and 155,000 Germans. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Brazil 1937* (Rio de Janeiro, 1937), p. 36.

14. Cf. also *The New Republic* (New York), December 1, 1937.

15. Among many books on the Integralist movement may be mentioned Plinio Salgado, *O Que é o Integralismo* (Rio de Janeiro, Schmidt, 4th edition, 1937); and Gustavo Barroso, *A Palavra e o Pensamento Integralista* (Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1935). The third edition of *O Que é o Integralismo* recounts in its preface the founding and history of the movement.

16. Bryan Green, *Brazil* (New York, International Publishers, 1937), Pamphlet No. 51, p. 21.

charge they had supported the "communist" plot. This group included one senator, four deputies and former Mayor Pedro Ernesto Baptista of Rio de Janeiro. Prestes was finally sentenced to sixteen years' imprisonment as the leader of the movement.¹⁷

Despite the extensive influence claimed for fascism and charged against communism in Brazil, the social and economic conditions which elsewhere have set the stage for these movements are largely absent. The country—still predominantly agricultural in character—has neither a numerous industrial proletariat nor an extensive middle-class.

The Brazilian Communist party was founded in 1921 and in the early twenties the anarcho-sindicalist trade unions were faced by the formation of parallel unions under communist auspices. In 1925 the socialists established a party of their own. The Socialist party gained its following chiefly among the lower middle classes; and on one occasion succeeded in electing two members of the Municipal Assembly of Rio de Janeiro.

In 1929 the communists organized the *Confederação Geral do Trabalho Brasileiro*, (Brazilian General Confederation of Labor) which joined the communist-controlled *Confederação Sindical Latino-Americana* or CSLA ((Latin American Trade Union Confederation)). The influence of this new body did not extend beyond Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Within a few years the socialists supplanted the communists as the controlling power of this organization, whereupon the communists broke away and organized a national trade union body which they called *Confederação Sindical Unitária*. But the older body, i.e., the Brazilian General Confederation of Labor, now under moderate socialist leadership, remains the strongest labor organization of Brazil. Thus in the labor movement, the anarcho-sindicalists have lost their early leadership, as in Argentina; and the socialists now have a larger following than the communists.

After 1935 the Communist party of Brazil gave up its extreme slogans and its irreconcilable attitude toward other political parties and groups. In a manifesto issued in connection with the First of May celebration of 1936 the party declared that "the time is not yet ripe in Brazil for a workers' and peasants' dictatorship, and even less for a proletarian dictatorship." It also stressed the necessity of close cooperation with all honest democrats, anti-imperialists and nationalists. At present the party is outlawed, its leaders under arrest and its newspapers suppressed.

17. *New York Times*, May 9, 1937.

CONSERVATIVE RULE IN ARGENTINA

With a population of more than twelve million, Argentina is the second largest of the South American republics. It is generally regarded as the leader of the continent's Spanish-speaking countries, in contrast to the Portuguese culture which characterizes Brazil. The Presidential elections of September 5, 1937, which resulted in the election of Roberto M. Ortiz, a millionaire attorney and importer, represented a victory of the country's conservative forces, especially of the large landholders, who had been restored to power following the military coup of 1930.¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Neither fascists nor communists possess sufficient strength to challenge the position of the present ruling groups, who are apparently disposed to govern through democratic forms. Aside from the 1930 revolt, Argentina has a record of peaceful and orderly development covering the last fifty years.

The new President, who will take office on February 20, 1938, was reported to have received 1,094,000 votes, as compared to 815,000 for his leading opponent, Marcelo T. de Alvear.²⁰ Ortiz was supported by the conservative National Democrats—the government party, now headed by President Justo—and by two smaller parties, the "Anti-personalista" Radicals²¹ and the Independent Socialists, which represent splits from the Radical and Socialist parties respectively. Alvear was backed by the Radicals, a moderately liberal party which ruled the country prior to the 1930 revolt; and the Progressive Democrats, a liberal group further to the Left. The Socialists ran their own candidate.

Argentina is one of the outstanding wheat-producing, cattle-raising and meat-exporting countries of the world. Much of the land is owned by large proprietors. The extensive export trade in agricultural and meat products furthered the early development of big cities, particularly Buenos Aires and Rosario. In these two ports, as well as in other cities, are concentrated large numbers of workers employed in the packing, shipping and other industries. The capital, Buenos Aires, now has more than two million inhabitants; and about a third of the nation's population is urban in character. In 1929 the total number of wage-earners

18-19. Cf. Ernest Galarza, "Argentina's Revolution and Its Aftermath," *Foreign Policy Reports*, October 28, 1931.

20. *New York Times*, October 10, 1937. The defeated Radicals declared that the election was "fraudulent" in a "major section of Argentina." *Ibid.*, October 21, 1937.

21. The Radical party split in 1923 during the administration of President Irigoyen into the more democratic followers of the President and his more conservative opponents. The latter faction called themselves "Anti-personalistas." On the history of the Radical party, cf. Galarza, "Argentina's Revolution and Its Aftermath," cited.

was estimated by the Argentine Department of Labor at 2,500,000, of whom some 450,000 were in Buenos Aires.

The socialists, who are credited with the support of some 300,000 voters, far outrank the communists in influence and importance. Their strength, which centers in Buenos Aires, is drawn both from labor and middle-class elements. The country's most powerful labor union body—the *Confederación General de Trabajo* or C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labor)—is under socialist control, with a sprinkling of communists and syndicalists in its membership. This body, with its 120,000 members, is at present the largest federation in South America. The bulk of its supporters belongs to the railway workers unions, the *Unión Ferroviaria*, with approximately 60,000 men employed on the lines' workshops and stations, and *La Fraternidad*, with some 10,000 locomotive engineers, conductors and firemen. The rest are mainly municipal and commercial employees, printers, carpenters and workers in the small urban trades.

In the race for national leadership of the organized workers, the socialist federation has now far outstripped its former rival, the *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina* or F.O.R.A. (Argentina Regional Labor Federation), which is under anarcho-syndicalist influence. For some time before the World War this organization claimed 130,000 members, but at present has hardly more than 10,000—mostly taxicab drivers and workers in small shops.²² It is this movement which has launched all the general strikes witnessed in Argentina.

The organization of the Socialists as a political force dates from 1895, when the *Partido Socialista Obrero Internacional* (International Socialist Labor party) whose name was later changed to *Partido Socialista Argentino*, was founded. At the start the party was international in fact as well as in name, including within its membership a

considerable number of foreign language groups.²³ It usually carried the majority of Congressional seats in Buenos Aires and at least one-third of the capital's city council. In 1927 a number of deputies led a split which resulted in the formation of the Independent Socialist party. This group, at variance with the parent body, subsequently supported the conservative administrations which have successively held the reins of power.

The 1934 elections gave the Socialists 42 out of the 156 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and two seats in the Senate.²⁴ But the influence of the group was augmented by its strategic position. Almost all the Socialist deputies were elected from Buenos Aires, while the deputies of other parties were residents of the provinces, where they spent a large part of the year attending to their private affairs. In consequence, the Socialists often constituted the majority of those present in the Chamber.

Part of the Socialist strength in the 1934 elections was probably derived from the suffrages of Radical party members. Voters of this group had been barred by the government from running candidates. But in 1935 President Justo (who had succeeded General Uriburu in 1932), possibly fearing the growth of Socialist strength, lifted the ban against the Radical party.²⁵ As a result, the Radicals were able to participate in the Senate elections of April 1935, and those for the Chamber of Deputies of March 1936. In the latter they won 44 seats, while the Socialists' representation declined from 42 to 25.²⁶⁻²⁷

Before the elections of March 1936, a more or less united front of all anti-fascist parties was established, largely due to the efforts of the communists. Accordingly, the communists refrained from running their own candidates in this campaign. Ten years earlier the party had obtained nearly 6000 votes. Its strength at present is reported as little larger. The party is illegal in some Argentine provinces and legal in others. Subject to frequent suppressions, alternating with periods of tolerance, it leads an insecure and often clandestine existence.

Fascism in Argentina is not a unified force centering around a "Leader" of national impor-

22. Much material about the history of the labor movement in Argentina can be found in: E. López Arango and D. A. de Santillán, *El Anarquismo en el Movimiento Obrero* (Barcelona, Ediciones "Cosmos," 1925); D. A. de Santillán, "El Movimiento Obrero Anarquista en la Argentina desde su Comienzo hasta 1910," published in 44 instalments in the anarchist daily, *La Protesta*, of Buenos Aires, 1929 to 1930; D. A. de Santillán: "La Protesta, su Historia, sus Diversas Fases y su Significación en el Movimiento anarquista de la América del Sur," *Certamen Internacional de la Protesta—en ocasión del 30 Aniversario de su fundación: 1897—13 de junio—1927* (Buenos Aires, Editorial La Protesta 1927), pp. 34-71; F. Carmona Nenclares, "Modalidades del Socialismo Argentino," *Leviatán, Revista Mensual* (Madrid), April 1936; "Lo que la F.O.R.A. representa en las luchas sociales de la Argentina y América," *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca* (Madrid), June 9-August 31, 1934.

23. Cf. Felix Weil, *Die Arbeiterbewegung in Argentina* (Leipzig, C. L. Hirshfeld, 1923), pp. 29-30.

24. Walter H. Mallory, *Political Handbook of the World* (New York, Council on Foreign Relations, 1935).

25. On the repressive policy of the government toward the Radical party, cf. Galarza, "Argentina's Revolution and its Aftermath," cited, p. 321.

26-27. The Independent Socialists, who had elected 8 deputies in 1934, named only 2 in 1936. In January 1937 an organizational struggle within the Socialist party led to a split, with the dissident faction threatening to organize a Socialist Labor party.

tance, despite the fact that this republic was the first Latin American country in which civilian groups were organized for the purpose of fighting the labor movement. In 1919 the militant attitude of the trade unions, headed by the anarcho-syndicalists and related groups, called forth a countermove on the part of anti-union manufacturers. With their assistance the conservative politician, Dr. Carles, organized the *Liga Patriótica Argentina* which eventually was dissolved by the Irigoyen administration.

When Irigoyen was overthrown by the military coup of 1930, the new government, headed by General Uriburu, organized a *Legión Cívica Argentina*. The membership, and particularly the leadership of the new organization, was recruited principally among government employees, the families of army officers, and the sons of the big landholders. It was trained by army officers, and its openly avowed purpose was to defend the new military régime and the interests of the landed aristocracy. The *Legión Cívica* was active in breaking up the meetings of the Radical party. Recently Argentina has possessed some eight uniformed fascist organizations, catering to the needs of various local or provincial cliques of politicians and employers. None of them, however, is of any national importance.

BALANCE OF POWER IN CHILE

Among the Pacific coast countries of South America, Chile on its narrow 2600-mile shoestring of land to the south, and Colombia—the northernmost republic of the continent—are the most advanced socially and politically. Chile's most recent elections—those of March 1937 for members of Congress—saw in action a Popular Front supported by socialists and communists, as well as by the middle-of-the-road Radical party. This alliance, however, was unable to muster sufficient strength to defeat the Right and Center parties, aligned with the administration of President Arturo Alessandri. The elections indicated that extremists on both Right and Left are still relatively small minorities. While the socialists named eleven members in the new Chamber, the communists elected only seven; and the Chilean fascists, who term themselves "Nacistas," could boast of three.

Chile's labor organizations were originally under the influence of the Democratic party, a liberal organization of the lower middle class. In the early part of the twentieth century a number of workers and labor leaders broke away from the Democrats and formed the Chilean Socialist party.²⁸⁻²⁹

The ferment stirred among the Chilean workers

by the Russian revolution and the ultra-radical mood of the rank and file caused the Socialist party leadership to join the Communist International in 1921. Practically unhampered by any ideological competition and enjoying a period of unrestricted civil liberties, the communist movement grew by leaps and bounds. In 1926 the party had eight representatives in the Chamber of Deputies and two in the Senate. It published six small daily papers in various sections of the country.

In the trade union field the Communist party controlled the strongest national labor body of that period, the Chilean Labor Federation or FOCH. For some time this Federation claimed 80,000 members. The radical trade unions, however, suffered a serious setback in 1927, when Colonel Ibañez effected his military coup d'état.³⁰⁻³¹ The communist leaders of the Chilean Labor Federation were arrested and exiled to faraway islands or isolated regions.

The period of military dictatorships which began in 1927 came to a close in 1932 with the establishment of the moderate conservative administration of Alessandri. Under his régime the communists regained control of the Chilean Labor Federation. But it was no longer the numerically important organization that it had been during the previous decade.

Moreover, a new generation of socialist propagandists had sponsored the formation of a trade union organization, A. F. of L. style, which was called the *Confederación Nacional de Sindicatos Legales* (National Confederation of Legal Trade Unions, or CNSL). Most of the unions of municipal and government employees are affiliated with this body, headed by Luis Solís, a moderate socialist. More than 65,000 dues-paying members belong to the unions represented in the CNSL. At the opposite pole is the *Confederación General de Trabajo* (C.G.T.), organized by the anarcho-syndicalists in 1932, which claims a dues-paying membership of about 6000.

A unification congress was held at the end of December 1936 by the two largest federations, the socialist CNSL and the communist FOCH, together with a number of non-affiliated organizations. The conference decided to merge these federations (the anarcho-syndicalists were not represented) under the new name *Confederación de Trabajadores de Chile* (Confederation of Workers of Chile).³²

28-29. Cf. *La Sección de Investigación de Valparaíso 1906-1910* (Valparaíso, Prefectura de la Policía, 1911: Police Reports), p. 29, et seq.

30-31. Cf. Charles A. Thomson, "Chile Struggles for National Recovery," *Foreign Policy Reports*, February 14, 1934.

32. *La Opinión* (Santiago de Chile), December 30, 1936.

The program of the Stalinite Communists—whose party, except under Ibañez, has always had a legal status—is now extremely mild. Carlos Contreras Labarca, the Secretary General of the party, in one of his public statements made in 1936, came out against that plank of the Radical party of Santiago which demanded confiscation of Church property.

Ever since the downfall of the dictator Ibañez in 1931, the alleged menace of “extremism” has served as a pretext to various successive Presidents for the establishment of armed civilian organizations or private armies for the purpose of defending their founders against political opponents and rivals. These organizations, fostered by President Montero in 1931 and by President Alessandri who has been at the head of the state since 1932, have all had an ephemeral existence. Alessandri's private army, *Milicia Republicana*, was dissolved by government decree at the end of 1935 under the administration of Alessandri himself. The jealousy of the army and the “radicalization” of many of the militiamen were among the causes of this measure.

An organization of outspoken fascist character and nation-wide scope—*Partido Nacional Socialista*—was established in Chile in the course of 1934. Its adherents are popularly known as “Nacistas,” and its uniformed storm troops are recruited from all sections of the population. Each Sunday the *Tropas Nacistas de Asalto* (Nazi Storm Troops), wearing grayish brown shirts and overseas caps, hold military drills.³³

The Chilean government seems apprehensive of the growing violence and power of the “Nacistas,” among whose leaders and organizers are many Germans and Italians. The leader of the party, which has three deputies, is Jorge Gonzales von Marces.

The threat of fascism as well as the Rightist trend of the conservative Alessandri administration, caused the progressive and labor parties to consider the idea of a Popular Front coalition. After a great amount of dissension within the Leftist forces, due chiefly to the antagonism between the two communist parties,³⁴ there emerged in 1936 the *Frente Popular Nacional* (National Popular Front) which included all progressive and radical elements. Its head was Marmaduque Grove, former Provisional President, former general of

the country's air force, and leader of several revolts against the dictatorship of Colonel Ibañez. At present he is a representative of the Socialist party in the Chamber of Deputies.

The “People's Front” subscribed to the principle of civil liberties; freedom of the press; disarmament and dissolution of the various fascist organizations; nationalization of natural resources (nitrates, copper, oil and coal); wage increases in proportion to currency devaluation; minimum wages; minimum unemployment relief; breaking up of the large agricultural estates; abolition of the Senate, etc.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN COLOMBIA

In present-day Colombia liberal democracy functions more successfully perhaps than in any other South American state. The elections of 1930 ended the thirty-year reign of the conservatives, the party supported by the big landholders and by the Catholic Church. The poll brought to the helm of government a liberal President, Enrique Olaya Herrera, who served until 1934. He was then succeeded by President Alfonso López, whose administration is now considered by many observers the most progressive on the continent. Under his rule a law for redistribution of land was approved, affecting especially large tracts which had remained undeveloped.³⁵ Labor legislation has been advanced and the constitution reformed, reducing the political and economic influence of a church formerly more powerful perhaps than the Church ever was in Mexico.³⁶

The Liberal party,³⁷⁻³⁸ led by professionals of the middle class, has attracted under President López the support of practically all radical organizations. In 1936 the First of May parade was a joint demonstration of organized labor, various socialist and communist groups, together with members of the ruling Liberals. The celebration was concluded by addresses delivered from the balcony of the presidential palace by President López and by Gilberto Viera, leader of the Communist party, who stood next to the head of the state and came out in support of the reformist and democratic policies of President López.

This working popular front in the political field has been recently duplicated in the field of trade union organization, with the formation in 1936 of

33. *New York Herald Tribune*, January 20, 1934. Another semi-military organization of a similar character is the *Falange de Portales*, named after Chile's reactionary strong man of a century ago. The avowed purpose of both of these organizations is “to fight communism.”

34. Both Stalinite and anti-Stalinite; the latter is headed by Senator Hidalgo, a nationally prominent figure.

35. *New York Times*, December 21, 1936.

36. *Acto Legislativo No. 1 de 1936-Reformatorio de la Constitución*. (Bogota, Imprenta Nacional, 1936).

37-38. The party has opposed the influence of the Church in politics. It has favored larger expenditures for public education; more equitable reorganization of the taxation system; and social legislation for the benefit of the workers.

the *Confederación Nacional Sindical* (National Trade Union Federation). This body embraces practically all Colombian unions, including both moderates and radicals. Its Central Committee is composed of eight moderates, four socialists, four communists and one anarcho-syndicalist.

The progressive tendencies of Colombia's present democratic rulers have won the support but undermined the aggressiveness of the country's communist movement. Fascism has not appeared in any organized form.

PERU RETURNS TO MILITARY RULE

Peru, situated half-way down the west coast of South America, recently reverted to old-style dictatorship. The Presidential elections of October 11, 1936 led to developments which had not been expected by any of the parties engaged in the struggle. Ballots were tabulated with great deliberation and only on October 21 was it reported that the candidate favored by the government, Jorge Prado of the Conservative party, was running second (with 50,000 votes) to Luis Antonio Eguiguren, candidate of the Social Democratic party (who was leading with 75,000 votes). The Social Democratic party was formerly an insignificant, mildly progressive but not socialist organization.

Tallying operations were at once suspended. The Constituent Congress on November 3 nullified the elections. Eguiguren's votes were thrown out on the ground that he had been supported by the APRA party—a body which had previously been outlawed because of its allegedly international character. Ten days later, the Peruvian Congress extended for three years—until December 8, 1939—the term of President Oscar Benavides. The President then dissolved Congress until he might see fit to call new elections, and became virtually an absolute dictator.³⁹⁻⁴⁰

The APRA, so-called from the initials of its full name, *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*, is South America's most significant and most indigenous Left-wing movement. It was founded shortly after the World War, as a result of the efforts of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, who remains its leading figure. It soon acquired great influence, due in part to the fact that it was born on native soil and used no imported slogans of European origin. The center of all dissatisfied middle-class elements, particularly university students, it took a stand against both the privileged classes at home—chiefly the landowners and the higher clergy—and foreign capital. A combination of agrarian socialism, Indo-American nationalism, and leader-

worship, it has represented—despite some alleged semi-fascist ingredients—the most progressive organized force in Peru.⁴¹ APRA groups have also been formed in other Latin American countries.

The APRA aims at uniting the peasants, the poorer intellectuals and the urban workers. To a certain extent it has been successful in winning over large sections of the working class. Its strength became apparent during the Presidential campaign of 1931. In those elections Haya de la Torre marshalled 106,000 votes, in comparison with 155,000 votes for Sánchez Cerro, who later ruled as dictator until he was killed by an *Aprista* in May 1933. In 1931 the APRA also won 51 out of the 145 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Although subsequently the movement has been forced to work underground, it has held and perhaps even added to its popular following.

The popularity of the APRA among dissatisfied elements partly explains the weakness of organized labor and other radical movements. There are, however, additional reasons. Peru is predominantly an agricultural country. Only 11.5 per cent of its six million inhabitants live in cities or urban settlements. Two-thirds of the population are Indians, most of whom speak only Quechua and do not understand Spanish.⁴² There are about 80,000 to 90,000 industrial workers, employed mainly in mining and textile industries, the transportation system, electric power stations and handicrafts.

The strongest and oldest labor federation in Peru is the *Federación Obrera Local de Lima* (Local Labor Federation of Lima), claiming about 15,000 members. Among the leaders of this organization are syndicalists, as well as socialists and communists. It is not affiliated with any international or Latin American federation. In 1929 the communists organized the *Confederación de Trabajadores del Perú* (Peruvian Confederation of Labor).⁴³ Fascism has also failed to achieve any significant growth in Peru, although an allegedly fascist candidate, Luis A. Flores ran third in the October 1936 elections.

41. On the APRA movement, cf. Luis Alberto Sánchez, *Haya de la Torre o el Político: Crónica de una Vida sin Tregua* (Santiago de Chile, Ediciones Ercilla, 1936); Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, *Política Aprista* (Lima, Imprenta Minerva, 1933), and *El Imperialismo y el Apra* (Santiago de Chile, Ediciones Ercilla, 1936). For discussions in English, cf. Carleton Beals, "Aprismo, the Rise of Haya de la Torre," *Foreign Affairs* (New York), January 1935; and Earle K. James, "APRA's Appeal to Latin America," *Current History* (New York), October 1934.

42. Cf. Luis E. Valcarcel, *Tempestad en los Andes* (Lima, Biblioteca "Amauta," 1927); and Ricardo Martínez de la Torre, *La Teoría del Crecimiento de la Miseria aplicada a Nuestra Realidad. Apuntes para una interpretación marxista de historia social del Perú* (Lima, Ediciones "Amauta," 1929).

43. "La C.G.T. del Perú," *Trabajador Latino Americano* (Montevideo), November 1929, pp. 21-27.

POLITICAL FORCES IN THE OTHER COUNTRIES

Limitations of space prevent more than passing reference to the five remaining South American republics—Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela. In none of them has a fascist movement assumed impressive proportions. The same may be said of communism, although the Latin American Labor Federation,⁴⁴ communist in philosophy, had its continental headquarters for many years in Montevideo, Uruguay. In the field of social legislation and the application of progressive policies, Uruguay was long in the van of South American countries. But a dictatorial coup staged by President Gabriel Terra in 1933 caused a sharp reaction to this trend. More recently democratic influences have forced some modification of Terra's authoritarian emphasis.

In Venezuela the iron-clad dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez brooked no popular movements of any type. Since the death of Gómez in 1935, the country has been passing through a transitional period under President Eleazar López Contreras. The west-coast republic of Ecuador has lately been the scene of numerous political overturns and successive dictatorships, but neither communism nor fascism is a factor of major importance in the national life.

Both Bolivia and Paraguay, following their three-year struggle over the Chaco, were the scene in 1936 of military revolutions, carried out by war-time leaders backed by the army and groups of demobilized veterans. Colonel David Toro in Bolivia as well as Colonel Rafael Franco in Paraguay announced programs of "national socialism," with extensive control of economic life by the state. But these régimes were short-lived. On July 13, 1937 Colonel-General German Busch ousted Colonel Toro. The new leader, reported to have the support of foreign capital, announced a return to democratic forms and the holding of elections on March 13, 1938. A somewhat similar development in Paraguay forced the fall of Colonel Franco on August 15, 1937, and under Provisional President Felix Paiva the old-line parties regained control.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

The economic developments of the last few decades and the after effects of the 1929 depression have wrought deep changes in the general character of South America's political conflicts. These are no longer mere family quarrels within

a comparatively small group of semi-feudal landowners, high church dignitaries, big businessmen, army generals and professional politicians. In some countries they have developed into class struggles of wider importance, assuming different forms according to the economic and political structure of the country. Thus Argentina, with its growing industries and its considerable foreign trade, had in the revolution of 1930 a well-defined clash between the conservative landowners, certain financial interests, and the higher military officers on the one hand, and middle-class and labor groups on the other. Elsewhere, the struggle reveals antagonism between a group of planters of an important crop, as in the case of the coffee growers in Brazil, and all other agricultural and business interests of the nation. In still less developed countries, as in Ecuador, it may be the conflict between army officers and certain middle class groups on the one hand, and the economic and political power of the Catholic Church on the other.

The growing importance of the labor movement, especially since the World War, has introduced a new element into the political conflicts of Latin America. For a number of years that movement was torn by internecine struggles between the conflicting ideologies of anarcho-syndicalism, socialism and communism, which are now gradually subsiding. There is a tendency towards the creation of unified labor federations embracing all workers regardless of their political beliefs. In the political field this trend manifests itself in "united fronts," and *comandos únicos*. Lately these "united fronts" have been extended to embrace all Left-wing political organizations including the progressive sections of the middle classes. The Popular Front movement, on the French and Spanish model, has made its appearance. This movement toward unity represents a natural reaction to another recent phenomenon in South America—the rise of fascist or near-fascist tendencies.

There are few indications at present, however, that either communism or fascism (except possibly in Brazil) are likely to become forces of major importance in the near future. The economy of all the South American republics is still predominantly agricultural, with mining in some countries ranking second in importance. Industry has recently made rapid strides—particularly in Argentina, southern Brazil and Chile. But even in these advanced states, farm workers far outnumber the industrial proletariat. Thus communism lacks any widespread basis for its development. The aggressive force of the communist movement has been weakened by the new "line" of collaboration

44. Cf. p. 227.

45. For a discussion of recent events in Bolivia and Paraguay, cf. H. Banta Murkland, "Woes of the Chaco Belligerents," *Events* (New York), October 1937.

with labor and liberal bourgeois groups, laid down by the *Comintern* at its seventh Congress in 1935. Communism has suffered recently more than other Left-wing movements from attacks by the conservative and reactionary forces which now hold power almost universally throughout South America. Moderate socialists, however, have a larger following than the communists in the principal states of the southern continent.

Fascism, too, lacks in South America the social and economic basis which made possible its development in Europe. Capitalism is in an early stage of expansion rather than of contraction. The middle class, with all its recent growth is much less numerous than in European countries. The fascist movement is divided in Argentina; it is more united and aggressive but still small in Chile. Its growth in Brazil has been important, but here its development is in part due to the presence of large German and Italian colonies. In no other republic, outside of these three, has it made significant progress. Neither fascism—outside of Brazil—nor communism appears strong enough at present to challenge seriously the semi-democratic institutions or the dictatorial régimes established in South America.

The continent's conservative politicians and military dictators have at times tolerated or encouraged fascist movements, principally to counterbalance the strength of Left-extremists, and to equip themselves with an auxiliary police force against labor activities. But it is obvious that rulers now in the saddle prefer to keep control in their own hands rather than abandon it to the new aspirants for absolute power who are their competitors. On the other hand, it should be recognized that, to dictators anxious to escape the necessity of reconciling their autocracy with democratic constitutions, fascism provides a tempting formula. They may prove psychologically receptive to the possibility of cloaking their rule in a new and convenient dogma. The difference between the old-fashioned military dictatorships and the new fascist form is greater than a difference of slogans and verbiage. Military dictatorships emphasize the privileges and power of the army. They look to the military rather than to mass support from the middle and other classes for their principal backing. They do not interfere to the same extent as fascist régimes in the private lives of the people and in their cultural activities. Thus, paradoxical as it may sound, military dictatorships, being less oppressive and "totalitarian," may act as a safeguard or preventive against the more oppressive fascist dictatorships.

It thus becomes evident that, despite "colonial" psychology and the traditional tendency to copy foreign models which characterizes so much of South American life, the external influences represented by communism and fascism have not deeply affected the masses of the people. The Left-wing movement which has won widest support is the APRA of Peru, in whose philosophy and program indigenous emphases have been dominant. Capitalist constitutionalism and military dictatorship in its traditional form are likely to continue in South America, until the popular masses are equipped to launch a social revolution of the Mexican type which will demand from the ruling oligarchies a wider distribution of economic wealth.

It must be recognized, however, that the trend of world events may distinctly modify political developments in South America. The outcome of the Spanish civil war, whether a victory by Right- or Left-wing groups, may alter the balance of social forces on the southern continent. Aside from Colombia, present rulers in the South American republics have almost universally expressed their sympathies for Franco. The Rebel movement, however, has apparently called out this widespread support, not so much because it is fighting for the cause of fascism, but because it defends the interests of the Spanish landowners and the Church—two elements with which South America's conservative leaders are closely identified. None the less, a victory for General Franco in Spain may materially stimulate the growth of fascist sentiment in the southern republics.

Moreover, a South American dictator, faced with a revolution against his rule, may decide his easiest course is to call the movement "communist." If driven into a tight place, he may turn to Italy or Germany for aid—a request which these powers in their present mood might conceivably grant up to the point of clashing with the United States. A possible alliance between a South American dictatorship and a European fascist state is not entirely beyond the range of possibility. Fear of these potential developments may have been behind President Roosevelt's insistent emphasis on the values of democracy during his South American trip in the fall of 1936.⁴⁶

The present world-wide struggle among the fascist, democratic and communist powers, it seems clear, will profoundly affect the nations of South America. While it is unlikely that these countries will exert any positive influence on the course of that struggle, they will unquestionably be influenced by its outcome.

46. Cf. Stephen Naft, "Behind the Pan-American Front," *The Nation*, December 12, 1936.